

THE DRAMATIZED NOVEL AGAIN

SOME ONE HAS MADE A PLAY OUT OF "UNCLE TOM'S CABIN."

A Deal With Political Ethics and Has Many Strong Points, But Seems to Lack the Elements of Enduring Success—Well Acted, and Lavishly Staged.

Once again we have the dramatized novel. Charles Edison Blaney, the producer of the latest stage version of a "best seller," evidently has so much faith in his play that he was the only manager with nerve enough to brave the theatrical terrors of Holy Week last night by presenting a premiere. He had faith in his play and confidence in his star, Miss Edna May Spooner, perhaps the greatest emotional actress ever born in Bergen street, Brooklyn, and so he went ahead last night at the Lincoln Square Theatre and put forth a production that knew no stint as to lavishness.

"Uncle Tom's Cabin" is the name of the play, and it goes without saying that the drama is a stage version of the popular novel of the same name. When so much time, intelligence, splendid acting and money are wantonly dispersed throughout a production one hesitates to decry the result. But in justice to its readers this Six must say unhesitatingly this morning that "Uncle Tom's Cabin" will not prevail. Perhaps it will last out the week. It may run even longer, but unless its producers quickly grasp that a play that has to do solely with a question of political ethics that is above the heads of the proletariat can never be popular the producers will learn to their sorrow that that time and money have been wasted.

Who dramatized the "best seller" the programme does not say. As the critics gathered in the lobby of the Lincoln Square last night between acts, those of them that remembered only the lines that were meaty with brute strength and power seemed to detect the hand of either Eugene O'Neill or Paul Armstrong in the stage version of the popular novel.

Again, the frivolous critics from the evening papers, their minds aglow with the sprightly lines delivered by a character named Topsy (a negro slave girl who contributes most of the comedy relief in blackface subterfuge work) all swore that they were minded of Augustus Thomas at his very best. Others, remembering the sweet pathos of a character named Evie (a girl)—popularly known through the play as Little Eva—were sure that the novel had been turned into a play either by Miss Ella Wheeler Wilcox or Mrs. Helen Green, the well known writer of children's characters and Christmas pantomimes. And so it went.

Quite setting aside the disappointment that the press agent's advance notices that the spectacular escape of a character named Eliza, a quadroon, would be reproduced in all the details described on page 32 of the novel—cracked ice floating in the Ohio River, bloodhounds, Eliza jumping bravely from cake to cake, etc.—were not fulfilled in the Charles Edison Blaney production, one cannot forgive the many grievous errors of ethics and aesthetics that obtain throughout the four acts of the drama. *Ophelia* and why borrow from "Lea, Armstrong, Thomas, Walter, or whoever you may like to wear her love for the lone little girl named Topsy, but when it comes to kissing the little black and wayward child Miss *Ophelia* does not come up to our expectations, our demands, upon the character—which, incidentally, it is true, but ever lovable—the author and dramatist have builded for us.

The refusal of Miss *Ophelia* to kiss Topsy even excited laughter among the hardened night riders that thronged the theatre, and therein lies the doom of the play. Topsy herself, with all her lonesome wifeliness (she said at one time that she had no father, mother, sisters or brothers, but she grew) loses out sympathy when she descends in the fourth act to stealing the gloves and silk sash of Miss *Ophelia*—admirably played by Mrs. Spooner herself—with no logical incentive to steal divulged.

A hit! Success! That much may be said for the benefit of the press agent before making out his Sunday advertisement; but when all is said and done, as already has been said, "Uncle Tom's Cabin" will not last. Rumors that the No. 200 company now is being rehearsed to enter the provincial trade are more than prophecies; they are ridiculous. In fact it may be stated authoritatively that already rehearsals are under way of an emotional drama called "Hazel Kirke," by Clyde Fitch, it is said, to supersede "Uncle Tom's Cabin" in the near future.

There was talk in the lobby of the Lincoln Square last night to the effect that "Uncle Tom's Cabin" had gone far toward causing the war. Some of this fitted over the corner where young Mr. Young Corbett and his brother, younger Mr. Young Corbett, were conversing.

Do you think it had anything to do with the war? The younger brother asked young Mr. Young Corbett.

"That I cannot say," answered the older Mr. Young Corbett. "But," he went on, "what is the difference? We licked her, and the Spaniards anyway." But that is as it may.

"Uncle Tom's Cabin" opens in the high ceilinged but humble home of old, Uncle Tom. The country cabin is situated twenty-five feet from the floor, but that is neither here nor there. Up to yet not a member of the Spooner family has appeared, but the audience sits quietly listening to the small talk of Uncle Tom and a mulatto named George Harris and bides its time. George enters to applause and after him comes his wife, Eliza, also to applause. A minute later a trusty driver named Simon Legree enters to blame. From that time on Simon Legree always is taking a wallop out of the aged negro slave, Uncle Tom, and when the old and lovable slave sits on the sofa, Simon Legree takes the chair at right stage. The chair is by a Grand Rapids furniture company, and if physicians will leave their seat numbers at the box office they will be notified by the head usher in case they are wanted.

"That isn't necessary," old James Wilson, a Southerner, observes to Simon—the unnecessary part of Simon's stage business being the kicks that Simon bestows lavishly upon the state of Uncle Tom's two children. And after Simon goes off stage George Harris comes in wearing a red handkerchief over his brow.

He tells Eliza, who is his wife according to the programme, that he will go to the north-land and seek work where slaves and masters are unknown. "Oh, don't, George! Don't! My God, don't—do not go away from here! You are the best man I ever knew. Tell me to be brave. Raise the boy to be good and fine and strong, Eliza, and come what may, you will not let them take the boy away."

Scarcely has George left when Mrs. Shelby enters with the killjoy news that Simon Legree has not only got Eliza's child, but has got poor old Uncle Tom, the leading character, as well. Eliza has fled with the child to dog the footsteps of her husband, George, before this, and Mrs. Shelby pleads with Uncle Tom to run away too. But old Uncle Tom has pledged his word to Massa that when his owner, Simon Legree, returns he will be ready to go with the slave driver. And the curtain splashes down into the tears that flood the house.

George Harris is seated in the boxes of Senator Bird in Ohio in the second act dressed like a prosperous doctor, a doctor. He wears a black gown and a white band and is travelling under an assumed name that sounds in the back of the head like "Shakespeare." Senator Bird is seated in a high collar with an old fashioned white muslin concertina at the bosom. George Harris to the Senator that never will be taken alive nor will he again permit himself to be put up at Shakespeare's sale. He is going out to find his wife, Eliza, for what are life or freedom without her and the little child, Harry? After he goes Harris and little Harry come in from Kentucky

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The effect of the conductor's moderation of the vocal volumes was most noticeable in the first scene. The three Rhine maidens were Miss Allen, Miss Weed and Mme. Kirby-Lunn, who sang their music with good intonation and with intelligence. Their singing came out far better than the rule and the rule of the scene became more than ordinarily clear.

The good playing of the orchestra continued through the performance, and Mr. Hertz's tempo were such as to prevent the work from moving heavily. It may be questioned, indeed, whether the wonderfully expressive narrative of *Loge* would have gained some weight by a slightly slower movement. But possibly the tempo was that which the singer, Mr. Burrian, desired. If so, he may be said to have sacrificed his vocal opportunities on the altar of artistic conviction.

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WELL ALL FLY IN TWO YEARS

If We're Sports and Follow the Lead of the Aero Club of America.

The Aero Club of America has come out flat and said that in two years all true sportsmen will be flying through the air and kicking their heels at terrestrial speed regulations.

The motor car will then be a curiosity and the pedestrian's only care to see that a rapidly descending aeroplane does not make use of him for a landing stage. It is the aviation section or committee of the Aero Club that is seeking to place us on a loftier plane. At present the members of the section can take us up, but they are not entirely confident that they can either keep us there or bring us down, with safety, to say nothing of dignity. Though the machines are being rapidly perfected there is still a wild propensity among them of closing up without notice, of initiating swallows in unexpected lateral movements, westward flights when the tiller is due east, and sometimes descending to earth on the back like the wild duck pierced with a bullet.

M. Albert Triaca, who conducts a school of aeronautics at 2 East Twenty-ninth street, addressed the club last night. M. Triaca is a Frenchman and has all the enthusiasm that has characterized France in matters pertaining to aerial navigation. The audience was made up for the most part of newspaper men. M. Triaca said that in two or three months there will be not ten miles but a hundred or a hundred and fifty miles. The speaker did not specify whether they would fly right side up or not. In ten or twelve years, he said, there would be as many practical flying machines as there are automobiles now. At present the only way to get a machine is to buy one. Rich men are needed to furnish prizes; prizes are needed to induce enthusiasts to take more enthusiasm.

Daniel L. Braine has placed money, time and the risk to life and limb at solving the problem of aerial flight. After assisting the natives of Montclair to the point of aerial flight, Mr. Braine moved the scene of his operations to Long Island and is now mainly engaged, it would appear, in tearing down barbed wire fences.

32 YEARS PARK SHEPHERD.

The Sheep Celebrate Roosevelt's Consulship With Five Sets of Triplets.

James Conway, the shepherd of Central Park, celebrated yesterday the fiftieth anniversary of his employment in the park. He has been shepherd for thirty-two years. He received a package yesterday from his mother, the subject of the beasts of the field, even though he did for a moment at his entrance suggest the apparition of a brick dashed hammering about to sow dissension among the children of the world.

The shepherd had his home in a red brick house in the city, and he was nearly concealed from observation by surrounding trees and shrubbery. Here six children came to him and his wife. After forty-eight years of married life the good wife was in her prime, and the children were married and started homes of their own.

The shepherd's constant companion is his collie dog Jack, presented to the park by J. Pierpont Morgan. The dog was a fine specimen of the breed, and he was nearly concealed from observation by surrounding trees and shrubbery. Here six children came to him and his wife. After forty-eight years of married life the good wife was in her prime, and the children were married and started homes of their own.

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